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ABSTRACT

An introduction and annotations of 37 research reports review evidence regarding the effect of parental involvement on student achievement in elementary and secondary education. The annotations cover studies from 1966 through 1980 that analyze such variables as family background and socioeconomic status, parent powerlessness, parents' expectations of their children's academic achievement, family and student self-image, educational activities in the home, and parents' involvement in parent-teacher associations and other in-school activities. The introduction briefly traces the development of research on parental involvement, starting with James Coleman's 1966 study, "Equality of Educational Opportunity." The author concludes that the form of parental involvement in education, whether in or out of school, is not important as long as the involvement is well-planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting and serves to integrate students' experiences at school with those at home. Further research is needed, the author says, on methods of home-school collaboration and on the need for federal aid to continue parental involvement. (Author/RW)

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PARENT PARTICIPATION -- STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Evidence Grows

Edited by

Anne Henderson

National Committee for Citizens in Education

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FOREWORD

The evidence is growing. According to recent studies, parent involvement in almost any form improves student achievement. To many lay people, the notion that such an obvious, commonsense connection has to be researched to be believed is ridiculous. Yet parents are often told, and many dedicated educators believe, that once children are in school their education is best left to teachers, that untrained parents unwittingly interfere with today's sophisticated teaching techniques, and that citizens who demand a voice in local education policy create needless conflict that disrupts the learning environment. Is it just a coincidence that during the last twenty years, the achievement test scores of our nation's students have steadily dropped or that public confidence in the schools has plummeted to an all-time low?

What these studies tell you, and what we at NCCE have long advocated, is that parents are a tremendous resource for public education, one that remains largely untapped. Generally, the researchers have looked at the different roles parents play in children's education, which ones are the most effective in developing cognitive growth, and what the connection is between involvement and achievement. Some have looked at programs for very young children, sometimes called "early intervention," where parents are trained

in how to stimulate their children's intellectual development; these are the most consistently positive studies. Others have examined federal "compensatory education" programs for disadvantaged children in preschool (Head-start) and early elementary grades (Follow Through and Title I), to see if the parent involvement required had an effect on achievement; most of these are also positive. Still others have tried to assess whether the climate of a school, or neighborhood, influences achievement by encouraging community participation. These are intriguing, but somewhat more ambiguous.

The watershed study on achievement in recent years was James Coleman's massive "Equality of Educational Opportunity," published in 1966 and funded by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Finding that a student's positive attitudes about himself and his control over the environment are critical to achievement, and that school "input" factors such as class size or teacher credentials are not, Coleman concluded that family background is the most important factor in a child's education. A major reanalysis of Coleman's data done by George Mayeske in 1973 identified three important family influences that seem to determine achievement: (1) students' and parents' expectations for academic performance, (2) the extent to which they engaged in activities to support these expectations,

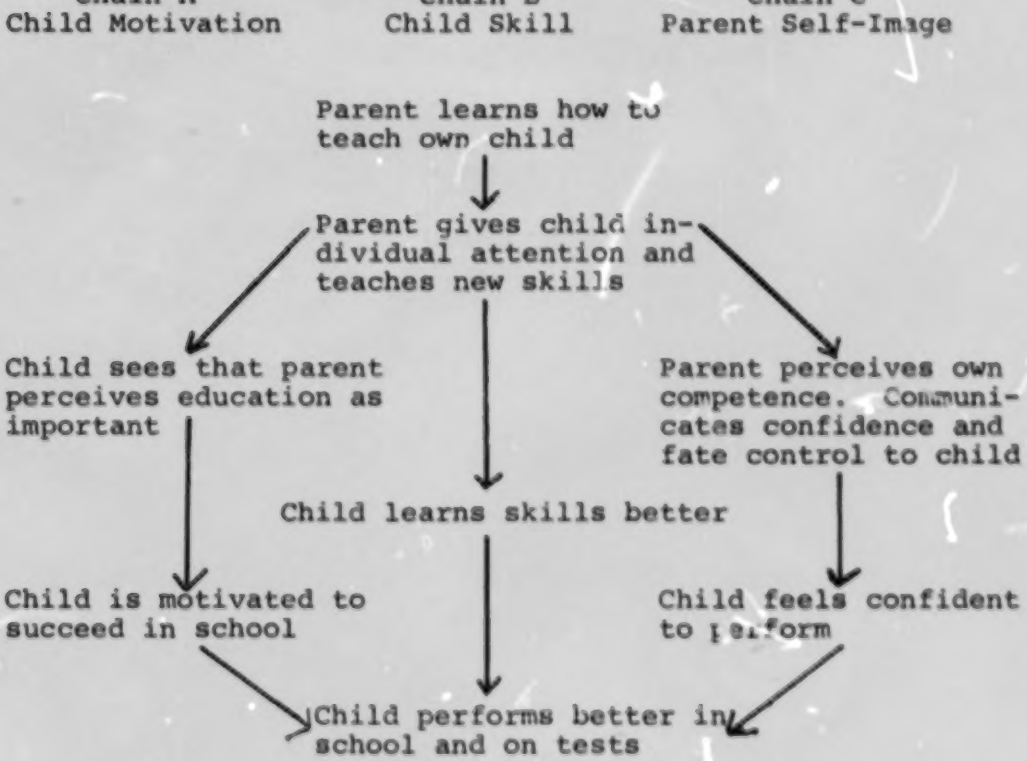
and (3) the student's attitude toward hard work as necessary to success. Christopher Jencks (1972) also reexamined Coleman's report and found that schools with an active PTA chapter had higher average student achievement, regardless of their social background.

From these studies, a subtle but compelling argument for parent involvement can be made. When parents show a strong interest in their children's schooling, they promote the development of attitudes that are key to achievement, attitudes that are more a product of how the family interacts than of its social class or income. If schools treat parents as powerless or unimportant, or if they discourage parents from taking an interest, they promote the development of attitudes in parents, and consequently their children, that inhibit achievement. An important question, however, remains unanswered: will involving parents who feel unimportant and powerless, and whose children are performing poorly in school, change those attitudes and improve the children's achievement?

The more recent research seems to say yes, especially IF the parent involvement is comprehensive and long-lasting and preferably if it is begun at an early age. The next group of studies after Coleman's centered mostly on early intervention and Headstart programs. Although parent involvement is mandated in Headstart in many forms -- as

policy council members or paid paraprofessionals, for example -- the most easily measured and direct role parents play is as tutors of their children. Miriam Stearns and Susan Peterson (1973) found that the results were clearest for the tutor role, but Charles Mowry (1972) found that children in programs where parent involvement was "high" (i.e., where they were active in all roles) showed the greatest gains.

Miriam Stearns developed an excellent diagram to outline how parent involvement fits into the motivational process that impels a child to learn.


Chain A
Child Motivation
Chain B
Child Skill
Chain C
Parent Self-Image
Parent learns how to teach own child
Parent gives child individual attention and teaches new skills
Child sees that parent perceives education as important
Parent perceives own competence. Communicates confidence and fate control to child
Child learns skills better
Child is motivated to succeed in school
Child feels confident to perform
Child performs better in school and on tests

Urie Bronfenbrenner, of Cornell University, has found from his own research and from reviewing others' (1974), that long-term gains in cognitive growth can be achieved by early intervention only if the mothers become actively involved in their children's learning. Programs of pre-school enrichment that just treat the children and do not bring the mothers into play, are ineffective. Norma Radin (1972) also found the same thing in the Ypsilanti, Michigan, program. Barry Guinagh and Ira Gordon's 1976 study of a long-term parent education program in Florida found that children who had been in the group for two-three years, beginning when they were only a few months old, were still scoring higher than control group children when they reached third grade.

The very early childhood programs tend to be home-centered or to involve extensive visits to the home. Once the children are attending school, they shift to involving parents in the classroom or to training parents in how to reinforce what is learned at school. Several studies that compare different levels of parent involvement in experimental school programs (Boulder Valley, Gillum, Radin, Woods, and Rich) find that the children whose parents are most involved make the greatest gains. Another interesting group of studies looks at the effect on student achievement of introducing a general parent involvement program. In

the federal Emergency School Aid, Follow Through, and Title I programs, and in the California Early Childhood Education program, where parents can play significant roles as paraprofessionals, decision makers, tutors, volunteers, observers, or learners themselves, student achievement seems to vary directly with the level of parent involvement (Gross, Gordon, Herman & Yen, Wellisch, Matuszek). Ira Gordon, who conducted several studies and reviewed other research, concludes that the different roles parents can play are all important and that the more comprehensive and longer lasting parent involvement is most effective, not just on children's achievement but on the quality of schools as institutions serving the community.

Some researchers have chosen to look at the problem from the reverse perspective, with interesting results. Instead of examining the effect that introducing a new parent involvement program has on particular students or a school generally, they have taken groups of high and low achieving students and studied the differences in how their families and schools have behaved. Charles Benson questioned families of 764 sixth graders about how they spend their time and found that children with parents who engage them in educational activities tend to do better in school, even if they are from very disadvantaged backgrounds (1980). Paul Rankin found that high achievers are

much more likely to have active, interested, and involved parents than low achievers (1967). In a large-scale, federally funded study, Edward McDill (1969) concluded that the degree of parental and community interest in quality education is "the critical factor in explaining the impact of the high school environment on the achievement and educational aspirations of students." A more focused study in a single large city eight years later by Theodore Wagenaar made almost identical observations (1977).

Taken together, what is most interesting about the research is that it all points in the same direction. The form of parent involvement does not seem to be critical, so long as it is reasonably well-planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting. Even programs that just involve parents as reinforcers of what is being taught at school are effective (Barth). One-shot public relations campaigns, on the other hand, seem to have little effect (Gillum, Wellisch).

What becomes very clear from reading the research is that families provide the most important learning environment of all. If parents are not encompassed in the learning process, schools -- and school children -- are being deprived of an essential source of support. If there is no continuity between home and school, it becomes difficult for a student to integrate the separate experiences.

As Sara Lightfoot points out, "Although parents and teachers are engaged in a complementary socio-cultural task, they often find themselves in great conflict with one another. Their adversarial relationship emerges out of their roles as they are defined by the social structure of society . . . " (in Sinclair, ed. p. 54). She suggests that the proper inquiry is not how to involve parents in the school, but how to reinforce and mutually adapt the curricula of families and schools.

The question of whether to have parent involvement is much larger than its potential effect on students' reading and math scores. It is central to our democracy that parents and citizens participate in the governing of institutions. In Mario Fantini's words, "It is a right per se to be validated simply by its practice," (in Sinclair, ed. p. 12). When students cannot learn to read or do math problems properly, it is a clear signal that our institutions are not functioning. Parent involvement is not a quick fix or a palliative, it is fundamental to a healthy system of public education.

Is there need for more research? The answer is yes. Although there has been much experimenting in the last few years (see Sowers), we are far from devising fail-proof methods of home/school collaboration that will work in every setting. In fact, we are even far from convincing

many educators and parents that it is necessary. Most of these studies were done on federal programs that mandate parent involvement (Title I, Headstart, Follow Through, Emergency School Aid) and/or with federal research funds. In many school districts, the only avenue for real parent participation is in federal programs. Yet in recent actions, Congress has eliminated the parent involvement provisions in Title I, targeted Follow Through and ESAA for extinction, and planned sharp budget cuts for research and evaluation. Headstart, for the present, remains intact. The future of parent involvement and reliable research on its benefits, consequently, looks dim.

We would recommend that groups of parents and citizens press local and state officials to keep these parent involvement mechanisms, even though they are no longer required, alive, to institute others, and to conduct their own research, with college or university help if needed. (The studies we feel could easily be replicated or redesigned for local application we have marked with an R.)

The Research Studies

NOTES TO THE READER

- Most of the studies in this bibliography are available through the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) System. If there is a 6-digit number preceded by ED before a reference, a copy of the article or paper may be obtained from:

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  State teachers' colleges, universities, or state departments of education may also have an Educational Resource Information Center system where you may read or copy the documents.

- If there is an R before the reference, this means that the study could probably be duplicated in your school district, especially with some help from a local college or university.

- References throughout this paper to ESEA, Title I, or just Title I, refer to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Title I (PL 95-561), the Compensatory Education Program for Disadvantaged Children; AERA refers to American Educational Research Association; ESAA refers to Emergency School Aid Act.

- Although we have made extensive efforts, involving computer searches, telephone calls around the country, and bibliographic cross references, this bibliography is by no means complete. We would appreciate knowing of any research which may have been overlooked or of any that is currently under way, as we do intend to update this bibliography from time to time.

R
Barth, Richard
"Home-Based Reinforcement of School Behavior: A Review and Analysis"
Review of Educational Research, Summer 1979 (Vol. 49 #3, pp. 436-58)

Summary: Teacher-parent collaboration to reinforce children's positive school behavior at home is effective in improving their academic performance.

This review of 24 studies published mainly in journals of psychology, focuses on a very specific type of parent involvement, where parents and teachers collaborate on how to reinforce, usually through positive rewards (although occasionally with negative consequences) children's behavior at school.

The most commonly used system is that of sending notes home from school daily. Although the studies varied, from normal classrooms to small groups of disturbed children, from positive reinforcement for good behavior to contingent reinforcement for unacceptable behavior (withholding TV privileges or allowances, for example), and from simple yes-no designs to elaborate contingency systems, they all showed a positive effect either on academic achievement or performance in school leading to improved achievement (completing homework assignments, less disruptive behavior, etc.)

16.

The systems were effective regardless of the amount of training parents received. Brief, simple instructions were enough for parents to run fairly elaborate programs. Contingent systems seemed to work best for "problem children," positive systems worked well for normal children. Once a program is working, it can be maintained less frequently and still have the same effect. Notes can be sent home only weekly or bi-weekly rather than daily, for example.

Benson, Charles S.
"Household Production of Human Capital: Time Uses of Parents and Children as Inputs"
Paper for a National Symposium on Efficacy and Equity in Educational Finance, University of Illinois, May 1979.

Summary: The amount of time and types of activities parents have with their children make a substantial difference on student achievement, except where socio-economic factors are very strong. Children from high income families tend to do well; children from low-income families perform below average regardless of how their parents commit time.

Benson and members of the Children's Time Study Project at Berkeley explored the relationship between family socio-economic status (SES) and student achievement, specifically whether the amount of time and types of activities

parents spend with their children affect student achievement, no matter what the family background. Their hypotheses were that high SES parents spend more time with their children and that student achievement is jointly determined by SES and parent time commitment.

Parents (usually the mothers) of 764 sixth graders in the Oakland, California, public schools were interviewed and filled out a questionnaire. Student achievement was measured by the California Test of Basic Skills. SES, achievement levels, and time were divided into high, middle, and low. First, SES levels were correlated with parent time available for children and with types of activities. Then patterns of time use were correlated with school achievement, controlling for SES.

Parent time and activities were divided into eight indices: Parent's household time availability (the sum of parents' non-working hours), mother's household time availability, cultural activity (reported by parent and child), household time (reported by parent and child), parent involvement (at school or in other organizations), and parent control (guidance of child's time).

The researchers found on the first seven indices that high SES is related to more time and activities with children. (One exception is that low SES mothers have more time than high SES mothers, largely because of unemployment).

It is interesting that parent control time is not related to SES. Also, it was noted that despite the general, significant pattern, many low SES families were in the highest activities time category and many high SES families in the lowest.

The relationships between patterns of time use and student achievement were more complex. In the high SES group, children do well in school regardless of their parents' attentions, but cultural and family group activities help them do even better. In the middle SES group, family activities, parent control, and parent involvement make a substantial difference on student achievement. In the low SES group, parent time and activities are not related to achievement, although family activities, parent control, and helping with homework may count a little.

To explain their findings, Benson speculates that class, neighborhood, and school environments are strong counterweights to individual family influence. High SES children, even when neglected by their parents, tend to have positive support from neighbors, teachers, and their own expectations of success in life. Low SES children, even those with strong, positive families, often are surrounded by negative influences around home and at school. Few expect much employment opportunity. Parent involvement has the greatest impact on school achievement when

outside influences are not strongly positive or negative. He concludes that social policy in education would do better to reduce the poverty environment than to put extra resources into schools.

Benson, Charles S.; Buckley, Stuart; and Medrich, Elliott A. "Families as Educators: Time Use Contributions to School Achievement"
In Guthrie, James (ed) School Finance Policy in the 1980's: A Decade of Conflict (Cambridge, Ballinger, 1980).

Summary: Children whose parents spend time with them in educational activities or are involved in school activities achieve more in school, regardless of socio-economic status, although different types of activities have differing effects on low-income than on middle- or high-income children.

This is a continuation of the Children's Time Study Project at Berkeley, further using the data gathered from the parents of 764 sixth graders in Oakland, California (see Benson's "Household Production of Human Capital.")

In this study, the researchers concentrate on the relationship between specific kinds of parent-child interaction and school performance. First, types of interactions are related to SES level; then, within SES groups, the interactions are related to achievement. Their hypothesis

is that according to SES levels, different types of activities have varying effects on achievement.

Parent-child interactions were divided into four types. Everyday Interactions (eating dinner together, doing house or yardwork, shopping and watching TV, going to places or events, spending weekend time together), Cultural Enrichment (going to cultural activities, playing games together, encouraging a hobby, participating in outside programs, reading together at home), Parent Involvement (volunteering, joining PTA, attending school functions), and Control over Children's Activities (rules about bedtime, chores, homework, TV and allowances, freedom to move around outside home, and parent pressure).

For all the SES groups taken together, everyday activities and control showed no strong relationship to achievement, but cultural activities and parent involvement were significantly related to the child's achievement. Five of the items were particularly related: visits to cultural centers, doing hobbies together, parent-facilitated participation in organized activities, dinnertime patterns, and doing things together on weekends.

Among low SES children, the effective activities were hobbies, participation in organized activities, having dinner together, and doing things on weekends. Cultural

visits, although related to achievement among both high and middle SES children, showed no effect on low SES children.

"In summary we do find some evidence that particular behaviors and interactions reduce the achievement deficit of low SES children when compared with their SES peers . . . However, we also find that high levels of (parent) inputs are not strongly related to high achievement within the low SES group and that on balance, parental inputs aside, their performance remains well below that of both middle and upper SES children."

This study corroborates Coleman's 1966 study, which concludes that SES has a stronger effect on achievement than anything else. Low SES children who have high parent inputs and who attend low income schools do better than low SES children who attend higher income schools but have low parent inputs. In other words, parent inputs do reduce the proportion of low achievers, but they do not overcome the disadvantages of low income.

R ED 116 791
Boulder Valley, Colorado, School District
"A Personalized Kindergarten Program with Supplementary Parent Involvement: Final Report"
Sponsored by the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Education, June, 1975.

Summary: "High Need" children who were given teacher-designed home stimulation by their parents scored significantly higher

on standardized tests and were able to maintain their gains longer than other "high need" children who received only an in-school program.

This study examines a three-pronged approach to bring children who showed developmental lags at the beginning of kindergarten up to an acceptable level of performance by the start of first grade. Diagnostic observation and testing, staff training for individualized instruction, and parent involvement were used over a three-year period. Children entering kindergarten were tested and a "high need" group identified. Part of this group was randomly assigned to receive parent involvement in addition to the individualized instruction all the children received in the classroom. Both groups were tested at the end of kindergarten on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test and the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, and again at the beginning of first grade, to measure how well their gains were maintained.

Parents of the experimental children met with the teacher every two weeks and were given workshops and suggestions on activities particular to their child's developmental needs. They then spent ten minutes a day with their children on specific educational activities.

Both groups of "high need" children scored in the normal range at the end of kindergarten on both tests. But at the beginning of first grade, the group who had

received home stimulation showed a markedly higher level of maintaining their gains than the "high need" children who had received only the in-school program.

ED 093 501

Bronfenbrenner, Urie
"A Report on Longitudinal Evaluations of Preschool Programs, Vol. II: Is Early Intervention Effective?"
Office of Child Development, DHEW, 1974.

Summary: Children who are the subjects of early educational intervention programs show higher and more lasting gains if their mothers are actively involved in their learning.

This is an analysis of several studies of different educational intervention programs for disadvantaged children. Bronfenbrenner contends that long-term IQ gains can be achieved by early intervention only when the parent-child relationship is properly treated, and looks at some current studies to see if they bear out his theory.

Three studies instituted home visits by tutor/teachers, but parent involvement was voluntary and passive. They reported insignificant long-term gains.

The remaining three studies designed more active parent involvement, where mothers received training in how to stimulate verbal interaction with their children. The most impressive, long-lasting gains were made in a 2-year program where tutors visited homes twice a week and

demonstrated toy kits to mothers and children. Less frequent sessions or training just for mothers (when children were not present) were not as effective.

He concludes that parent intervention acts as a kind of fixative, stabilizing effects produced by other processes, and that it is effective only when the target is neither the child nor the parent, but the parent/child system (p. 34).

Coleman, James S., et al.
Equality of Educational Opportunity
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, DC, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966.

This massive study, the first of its kind on student achievement, did not directly consider the relationship of parent involvement to student performance. It did, however, produce a large bank of data, which have been drawn upon by many other researchers, notably Mayeske and Jencks.

Among the major findings of the Coleman report were that family background is of critical importance in school achievement, and that attitudes including self-concept and a sense of control over one's environment, which probably result from home experiences, are highly related to achievement in school.

Comer, James P.
School Power
New York, MacMillan, The Free Press, 1980

Summary: A long-term program to change the governance and organization of two inner-city New Haven schools, partly by including substantial parent involvement, resulted in significant, lasting gains in student achievement.

In 1968, a five-year program was begun in two inner-city New Haven elementary schools, a collaboration among the Yale Child Study Center, the National Institute for Mental Health Center for Minority Group Studies, and the local Title I program, to improve the quality of living and learning. The program goals were:

1. To modify the social and psychological climate of the school in a way that facilitates learning.
2. To improve the achievement of basic skills at a statistically significant level.
3. To raise motivation for learning, mastery and achievement, to increase the academic and occupational aspirations of each child.
4. To develop patterns of shared responsibility and decision making among parents and staff.
5. To develop an organizational relationship between child development and clinical services and the New Haven public schools.

To administer the project, several new structures were organized. A governance body, similar to a board of directors, composed of administrators, teachers, parents, aides, and professional support staff, gave overall guidance and direction. School committees, with elected parent representatives, selected staff and curriculum, and evaluated the program. The pupil personnel team arranged necessary services for teachers, aides, and students. The parent program provided stipends for 10-12 parents who became teacher aides. Workshops were held for two weeks each summer to bring parents and teachers together, and an Extended Day program was held three days a week to provide teacher training and parent participation programs.

A variety of evaluative methods were used, including consumer evaluations, reports of outside evaluators, test scores, and program studies. No control groups were used for comparison, to quell charges that the children were being treated like "guinea pigs."

During the first five years, both schools attained the best attendance records in the city, greatly reduced student behavior problems, minimized parent-staff conflict, and near grade-level academic performance. At King School, which continued the program after the five-year project ended, all the program goals were achieved. Since 1975, students at King rank ahead of all other inner-city schools in

reading and math skills, and moved from 20th in reading and 31st in math to 10th place in both among all New Haven schools.

" . . . No particular model, technology, method, or person is as important to improved student behavior and learning as a process that places highest priority on flexibility, accountability, shared expertise, open communication, trust, and respect," (p. 235).

Gallagher, James J., et al.
"Parent Invovement, Parent-Teacher Interaction, and Child Development"
Paper presented at the Biennial Southeastern Conference of Human Development, April 1976.

Summary: A project to develop the parents' educational role in the home and to increase interaction between home and school significantly improved children's scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

This project, developed by the staff of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with a grant from the Office of Child Development, tested the contention that the most important goal of the schools is to provide support for the parents' educational role in the home, and that more interaction between home and school will benefit a child academically and help to develop success-related behavior traits.

28.

One hundred kindergartners were selected from each of four experimental and four control schools. At the beginning and end of the school year, they were all tested on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to compare their development.

Teams of four volunteer parent home-school coordinators were trained for each school at a summer workshop, to which all interested parents were also invited. Throughout the school year, classroom activities were planned by teams of teachers, parents, and the volunteer coordinators.

The researchers found that some parent-initiated activities were particularly related to achievement, as measured by the test scores: reading books at home, using the library, guided use of television, and extracurricular lessons.

R ED 144 077
Gillum, Donald M.
"The Effects of Parent Involvement on Student Achievement in Three Michigan Performance Contracting Programs"
Paper presented at AERA Annual Meeting, NY, April 1977

Summary: In three Michigan school districts that experimented with involving parents in performance contracts to improve children's reading skills, the district with the most comprehensive parent program scored the greatest gains.

In 1972, the Michigan legislature authorized funds for school districts to conduct performance contracts to improve

reading skills in local schools. Three school districts developed programs with parent involvement components.

This study tried 1) to determine if participating students had higher reading achievement than other students, 2) to determine if there was a significant difference in reading achievement among the three performance contracting programs, and 3) to compare the three contracts to determine if differences in their parent involvement features accounted for differences in reading achievement.

Nearly 2,000 disadvantaged students in 2nd through 6th grades in 12 schools were pre- and post-tested at the beginning and end of the school year on the Stanford Achievement and the Metropolitan Achievement Tests. Then their post-test scores were compared with national norm tables to determine if their achievement was greater than would have been expected from their pre-test scores. Averages were computed for each of the three districts.

The performance contracts were let to private organizations (e.g., Behavioral Research Laboratories), who designed and conducted special reading programs and who were paid on a sliding scale according to the gains students made on standardized tests.

Parent involvement in each of the districts varied widely. District A conducted a community information program for parents and citizens. Each participating school

principal held at least four informational meetings during the school year. District B just held an open house at the beginning of the year and presented demonstrations of the program at a PTA meeting. District C built an intensive in-service training program for administrators, parents, and teachers into its contract. Forty parent leaders received training, then conducted sessions for the other parents, on their child's educational program, on cooperation at the school, and on reinforcing the child at home. In addition, both parents and schools received incentive vouchers redeemable for educational materials, and parents received stipends for attending meetings.

In all three districts, the participating students achieved significantly higher in reading than was expected, but District C students scored, on the average, significantly higher than those in districts A and B. The only major difference among the design of the three programs was their parent involvement component.

"For most districts where parent involvement was 'pro forma' and consisted either of filling out a questionnaire or attending large group meetings, the achievement of the pupils was similar, but less than the achievement in the district where parents participated in deciding what was taught and had responsibility for working with the teachers and children," (p. 18).

ED 136 967

Goodson, Barbara D. and Hess, Robert D.
"Parents as Teachers of Young Children: An Evaluative Review of Some Contemporary Concepts and Programs"
Bureau of Educational Personnel Development, DHEW, Office of Education, Washington, DC May 1975.

Summary: The evaluations of 29 preschool programs for disadvantaged children were reviewed to determine what effect their various parent-training features had on short- and long-term gains in achievement. The programs were successful regardless of how parent involvement was organized.

This Department of Health, Education and Welfare-sponsored review of current preschool programs for disadvantaged children had three objectives: 1) to identify categories of parent involvement in early education, 2) to describe 29 programs that use parent involvement, and 3) to summarize the studies evaluating the programs' effectiveness. The researchers interviewed project directors and reviewed program evaluations to obtain their data. None of the programs was actually visited.

The programs reviewed all had a parent training feature designed to teach parents how to prepare their preschool aged children for school. Each was rated according to four criteria: 1) the salience of the parent component (how intensive the training, from home visits only, through parent classes plus preschool classes for children); 2) the content (verbal, sensory-motor, general cognitive, and child

development principles); 3) teacher/parent ratio (one-to-one, small groups, or one large group); 4) specificity and amount of structure (whether training is specific or general, whether structure is highly organized or unplanned). (None of the participating families was involved in the programs' design or implementation.)

The criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs are: 1) immediate advantages on intelligence tests, 2) long-term advantages on intelligence or achievement tests, 3) advantage of program children in school performance, all compared to control children.

"As a group, the programs consistently produced significant immediate gains in children's IQ scores, seemed to show long-term effects on children's IQ and their school performance, and seemed to alter in a positive direction the teaching behavior of parents."* (emphasis added)

Although some programs were more effective than others, there was no clear relationship between program design and outcome. The authors did not feel this means that program design is unimportant, but speculated that factors other than those measured influenced effectiveness. They attribute

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* (The gains achieved in the programs fell along a normal distribution, a few small, a few large, and most "quite moderate," but nonetheless significant.)

the success of these programs to an increase in parents' awareness of their influence and their child's behavior, a more systematic focus on parent/child interaction in educational activities, an increase in verbal interaction, and an increase in parent responsiveness to the child.

Comments: The programs reviewed are described at some length in this study and addresses and staff directors are included.

ED 154 931
Gordon, Ira; Olmsted, Patricia; Rubin, Robert, and True, Joan
"Continuity Between Home and School: Aspects of Parent Involvement in Follow Through"
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1978

Summary: Parent education programs sponsored by the federal Follow Through program lead to improved performance of children on reading and math tests.

To determine the impact of parent education in the federal Follow Through program, the researchers gathered data on programs in ten communities in nine states.

Parent involvement in Follow Through was divided into six basic roles: teacher of own child, paraprofessional at the school, decision maker, learner, audience, and classroom volunteer. The key role is teaching one's own child, which includes that of paraprofessional.

34.

From videotapes of parents teaching their children, scores of "Desirable Teaching Behaviors" (DTB's) were made for Follow Through and non-Follow Through parents. Follow Through parents exhibited a significantly higher number of desirable teaching behaviors. DTB's were found to be significantly related to children's performance on reading and math tests.

These findings are preliminary and suggest the need for more comprehensive and rigorous research.

Gordon, Ira
"What Does Research Say About the Effects of Parent Involvement on Schooling?"
Paper for Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1978.

Summary: This review of recent research indicates that the more comprehensive and long-lasting the parent involvement, the more effective it is likely to be, not just on children's achievement but on the quality of schools as institutions serving the community.

This is a thoughtful review of research on the effect of parent involvement on student achievement by a Professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, who had published a number of studies on the subject.

He divides parent involvement into several models: the Parent Impact Model (the influence of parents and the home

on a child's learning patterns), the School Impact Model (direct parent involvement in the school, from volunteering to serving on governance councils), and the Community Impact Model (parent involvement in all possible roles, from teacher at home to active member of local community), and assesses the research on each.

Most of the research has centered on parent intervention programs for preschool programs, and the evidence is consistently positive that there are significant, long-term effects, and that children whose families participated do better than comparable children for as long as ten years after the programs ended.

Parent impact programs for school-aged children have not been as thoroughly researched, but the data show that the quantity of home visits is the most important aspect of these programs. They are most effective when carefully planned, last at least a year, have an educational focus, and include as their major delivery system parents working at home with their children.

Gordon found almost no research on the effect of the school impact model on student achievement, partially because it is much more difficult to study.

On the community impact model (the Follow Through program is a good example of this), research indicates that the effect on achievement is strong and positive. Children

whose parents are directly (rather than indirectly) involved over a period of years, beginning in preschool, score higher on achievement tests than other children. The effect seems to be greater on second children than on first.

His conclusions are that the more comprehensive and long-lasting the parent involvement, in all roles rather than concentrated in one or two, the more effective it is likely to be, not just on children's achievement but on the quality of schools as institutions serving the community.

R ED 102 666

Gross, Mary
"Combined Human Efforts in Elevating Achievement at the Wheatley School, Washington, DC"
Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University, 1974

Summary: A comprehensive program of parent involvement at a large inner-city elementary school produced significant gains in the students' reading and math scores.

Wheatley School is a small, overcrowded pre-kindergarten-6 elementary school serving a largely black and disadvantaged neighborhood in Washington, DC. As part of this practicum and the Title I program, a comprehensive parent involvement strategy was implemented, more than doubling the average number of parents participating in various activities.

Over 800 students in grades 1-6 were tested in reading and mathematics at the end of the 1973-74 school year and their scores were compared with those from the end of the previous year.

Parent involvement consisted of 1) providing parents with "success reports" via written notes, fliers, home visits, and telephone calls, 2) holding informal parent group discussions, 3) encouraging parents to contact other parents, 4) sending home ideas for parents to work with children, 5) sending home notices of books, films, TV programs and cultural activities, 6) recruiting parents to participate in the afterschool parent program, 7) organizing parent-teacher mini-workshops. In addition, a continuing education and counselling program was established after school.

All grades showed a significant increase in both reading and math scores. The gains were highest in the early grades, with a 20% increase in 1st grade students' reading at grade level, descending steadily to a 5.5% increase in 6th grade students' reading at grade level.

The school instituted a comprehensive improvement program that included staff development, expanded curriculum, continuing education for adults, and counselling, in addition to parent involvement. The data do not attempt to isolate the effects of the whole program from those of the parent involvement program.

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ED 135 469

Guinagh, Barry and Gordon, Ira
"School Performance as a Function of Early Stimulation"
Florida University, Gainesville, Institute for
Development of Human Resources, December 1976.

Summary: An early childhood program training mothers in how to use learning materials at home produced significant advances in reading and math tests when the children entered school, which were maintained at least through the 3rd grade.

This is a longitudinal study of 91 representative graduates of parent education projects to determine whether there were lasting effects on school performance and home-school relations.

Assignments to special education programs and reading and math scores for up to six years following the end of the program were gathered and compared for three groups of children: those involved for 2-3 years, beginning when the child was under one year old; those involved for one year; and those in a control group. All were randomly assigned at entry into the program.

The parent program consisted of home visits twice every three weeks by a paraprofessional, each lasting about an hour, where mothers were shown how to use materials in learning activities with their children at home. The program ended on the child's third birthday. When tested at the beginning of first grade, three years after finishing

the early education program, and again during third grade, the two treatment groups had many fewer assignments to special education classes (under 5%, as compared to 25% for the control group), and the 2-3 year group had significantly higher scores on reading and math tests than the control group.

The researchers are encouraged that a home visit program using locally recruited paraprofessionals can be sustained for 2-3 years, using simple materials, and can lead to gains that last through the fourth grade.

ED 081 471

Henderson, Ronald W. and Swanson, Rosemary
"The Socialization of Intellectual Skills in Papago Children: The Effects of a Parent Training Program"
University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona Center for Educational Research and Development, July 1973.

Summary: Native American children lacking an important basic learning skill were successfully coached at home by their mothers, who were trained by native paraprofessionals.

Under the sponsorship of the Arizona Department of Education, 30 randomly selected mothers of first grade Papago Indian children were trained by Papago paraprofessionals to work with their children at home, especially on their question-asking skills. A random control group was also selected. The children of both groups were tested four times, once before the project, twice during the school

year, and again at the end, on their questioning skills. They were also tested at the end on their reading and math skills (Metropolitan Achievement Test).

Parent involvement consisted first of semi-weekly training by the paraprofessionals, using role-playing and positive reinforcement. Then the mothers would give their children ten-minute lessons at home between each training session.

"Clearly the most important finding . . . was that when parents intervened by practicing, with their own children, socialization skills which they learned in a training program . . . the children's performance on the question-asking tasks increased significantly . . . " (p. 41). There did not appear to be an immediate relationship between the children's performance on the questioning skills tests and the reading and math test.

The researchers speculate that because the difference between the two groups is similar to that typically found between groups different in social class or ethnicity, trained parent intervention can overcome those differences.

Herman, Joan L.; and Yen, Jennie P.
"Some Effects of Parent Involvement in Schools"
Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education, University of California at Los Angeles
Paper for AERA Annual Meeting, Boston, April 1980.

Summary: Parent involvement in 250 California elementary schools was found to be positively related to student achievement and to parent satisfaction with the school.

This is a study drawn from evaluation data collected in 1976 on California's Early Childhood Education program (ECE) to explore 1) whether parent involvement is positively related to school outcomes and 2) the relationship among different aspects of parent involvement. From each of 256 schools, two 2nd grade and two 3rd grade classrooms were randomly selected for study. Teachers, a sample of parents in each classroom, and the school principals responded to questionnaires; and in 72 of the schools, reading and math tests were given to the students. "Outcomes" were defined as parent satisfaction (on a 1-5 scale), and student achievement, the sum of standardized classroom scores on the tests.

Parent involvement was broken down into several categories. School-home communication, parent awareness of school operations, parent influence, parent participation in school functions and activities, and teacher-parent relations.

The findings show a significant relationship between parent involvement, especially participation in school activities, and student achievement, and between parent involvement, especially influence in decision making and good parent-teacher relationships, and parent satisfaction.

Therefore, to both student achievement and parent satisfaction, parent involvement is pivotal.

The relationship between parent satisfaction and student achievement, although not directly correlated in this study, is interesting, for parents' perceptions of their influence and relationships with teachers affect their participation in school activities, which in turn has a positive effect on student achievement.

R ED 172 374
Ingram, John E., Jr.
"School-Community Relations and Student Achievement"
Paper Presented at the AERA Convention, San Francisco, April 1979

Summary: School-community relations at an all-black inner-city school were positively related to student achievement.

This study, conducted by the Home-School-Community Relations Project at the Wisconsin Research and Development Center, defined five categories of school-community relations and attempted to relate them to student achievement. A sample of 64 parents of 4-6th graders attending an inner-city school with over 600 black students were interviewed and their responses correlated with test scores from the school.

The five categories of school-community relations were: access (opportunity to have interest represented in the school), communication (interaction between school

and public), involvement (public contribution of time and energy to the school), participation (a vehicle to policy-making in the school), and resolution (problem-solving process).

Communications appeared to be the most important type of school-community relations, the one most related to achievement and to the other types. Resolution was also related to achievement. The author points out that although no one activity alone showed a positive impact on student achievement, the processes of community relations taken together (especially communication and resolution) did.

Irvine, David J.
"Parent Involvement Affects Children's Cognitive Growth"
University of the State of New York, State Education Department, Division of Research, Albany, August 1979.

Summary: For disadvantaged children in an experimental pre-kindergarten program, parent involvement had a highly significant effect on reasoning, verbal concepts, and school-related skills.

This analysis was designed to determine whether the amount of time parents were involved in an experimental pre-kindergarten program in New York state was related to the performance of their 4-year-old children on each of three measures of cognitive achievement. Controls were introduced to test whether the involvement is actually

related to achievement, rather than to other factors, such as levels of family education and income, or children's age and previous performance.

Parent involvement included school visits, home visits by school personnel, meetings, employment in the program, and incidental contacts. Five levels of involvement were determined according to the number of hours the parents were involved over the school year (50, 100, 150, or 200 hours).

For general reasoning, as measured by the Walker Readiness Test for Disadvantaged Children, parent involvement was found to have a "highly significant effect." Children's scores varied directly with the number of hours of their parents' involvement, controlling for all other factors.

For school-related knowledge and skills, as measured by the Cooperative Preschool Inventory, parent involvement also was found to have a highly significant effect, controling for other factors.

For knowledge of verbal concepts, as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, results also showed a highly significant relationship between parent involvement and achievement, with the <u>greatest</u> effect for children who had started out with lowest scores.

Jencks, Christopher
"The Coleman Report and the Conventional Wisdom"
In Frederick Mosteller and Daniel Moynihan (eds)
On Equality of Educational Opportunity, NY, Vintage, 1972.

Jencks reanalyzed the Coleman data for 285 urban elementary schools and found that schools with an active PTA averaged higher in student achievement that those with an inactive PTA or no PTA.

R
Karraker, R. J.
"Increasing Academic Performance Through Home-Managed Contingency Programs"
Published in The Journal of School Psychology, Vol: 10, #2, 1972.

Summary: Second-grade students improved their math achievement when their parents rewarded them for good performance.

This study attempted to determine whether the math performance of 16 students in three second grade classes could be improved by enlisting the rewarding power of the parents. Parents were informed of the program by three methods, and the children's performance on math exercises over 40 days and under varied circumstances was recorded.

Parents were asked to choose a reward their child would like to have and to give that reward to the child when presented with a daily report card showing that his performance either matched or exceeded his previous day's performance.

The study showed that during the time when the rewards were being offered, all the children improved their performance; when the rewards were withdrawn, they slacked off. The results did not vary according to how the parents were informed of the program.

ED 161 980

Matuszek, Paula
"Review of Research in Parent Involvement in Education, Interim Report: Low Socio-Economic Status and Minority Student Achievement Study"
Austin Independent School District, Texas, July 1977.

Summary: Data from a number of unpublished studies show that parent involvement can be effective in improving the academic achievement of low-income and minority children.

This is a review of some unpublished research on the effect of parent involvement on student achievement.

Parent involvement, in the studies reviewed, included tutoring at home, volunteering or working at schools, serving as community aides or school liaisons, serving on committees, acting as advisors or decision-makers on matters of school practice, and displaying interest in their children's education.

Generally the studies suggest that parent involvement can be effective in improving the academic achievement of low SES and ethnic minority children. For preschool children, research shows all types of parent involvement to be

beneficial. The sketchier research on elementary grades (where there are fewer organized programs of parent involvement to study) indicates that programs to train parents in tutoring techniques have been most successful.

Mayeske, George W.
A Study of the Achievement of Our Nation's Students
Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1973.

Summary: This massive reanalysis of the Coleman report concluded that parent expectations and supportive activities are crucial to student achievement.

This reanalysis of the data from the Coleman Survey of Educational Opportunity concluded that certain Family Process variables played a key role in student achievement.

When Mayeske examined the role that family structure and stability plays in student achievement, he found the effect was relatively small for both white and black students, although larger for other minority groups. There was also a tendency for the effects to be greater for boys than girls. In looking for an explanation for the unexpectedly similar results for blacks and whites, when the incidence of family disruption is greater for blacks, he examined the effects of Family Process and identified three motivational variables that intervene between the structural aspects of the family and student achievement. These were:

48.

a) the students' and parents' expectations for academic performance; b) the extent to which they engaged in activities supportive of these expectations; and c) the students' attitude toward hard work as an antecedent of success and the benefits of education.

ED 030 205
McDill, Edward L.; Rigsby, Leo; and Meyers, Edmond
"Educational Climates of High Schools: Their Effects and Sources"
Johns Hopkins University Center for the Study of Social Organization of Schools, Baltimore, April 1969.

Summary: In a large nationwide study, parent involvement was found to be the critical factor in the achievement and aspirations of high school students.

This large-scale study sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education explored three problems: identification of different dimensions of education and social climates of high schools, their relative effect on academic performance and college plans of students, and the relationship between sources of climate on the achievement and college plans of students. Twenty public high schools in eight states were selected by random sample. Questionnaires were sent to over 20,000 students, 1,000 faculty members, and all 20 principals; then two academic tests were administered to all the students in the schools, the Aptitude for Abstract Reasoning and Achievement in Math tests from Project TALENT.

Parent involvement in the high school (PIHS) was identified as a "climate source variable" and correlated with achievement measures and college plans.

PIHS was determined by faculty responses to three questions: whether parents are apathetic to school policies, whether parents seem interested in their children's progress, and whether parents often ask for appointments with teachers to discuss their children's school work.

The authors conclude that the degree of parental and community interest in quality education is "the critical factor in explaining the impact of the high school environment on the achievement and educational aspirations of students," (p. 27). Not only did PIHS have a "substantial effect on math achievement and college plans," it also had a significant effect on the achievement and aspirations of students with comparable ability and family educational background (p. 17).

Finally they quote former Education Commissioner Harold Howe:

> In all communities -- rural and suburban, but especially inner-city -- the principal needs to take the initiative in tailoring his school to the character of the community. He needs to solicit parent participation and to help parents understand what kind of contributions they can make. The principal ought to be welcoming parents and letting them see how the school is run and explain to them its policies and programs. He should at the same time be converting the school into a community resource that offers

50.

adults a center for community activities, for instruction in practical subjects as well as leisure-time activities (p. 27).

ED 080 216

Mowry, Charles, for
Midco Educational Associates, Inc. (Denver, Colorado)
"Investigation of the Effects of Parent Participation in Headstart: Non-Technical Report"
DHEW, Washington, DC, November 1972

Summary: Headstart centers with high levels of parent involvement consistently had children who performed higher on standardized tests, parents who were more satisfied, and communities that were more responsive to the disadvantaged, than centers with low parent involvement.

The Headstart program mandates parent involvement in every local project. This study looks at three types: 1) parents as decision makers, 2) parents as learners, 3) parents as paid employees in Headstart. The relationship of these roles to four areas of the program was then investigated: 1) quality of the program, 2) change in community institutions, 3) Headstart children, 4) parents of Headstart children.

Twenty Headstart centers across the United States were selected for study from a 10% random sample (N=94). From structured interviews, five centers high in parent involvement opportunities, five low in opportunities, and ten

mixed in types of opportunities, met the design criteria. At each center, approximately 20 parent-child pairs were studied, and these were also broken down into high-low categories from questionnaires.

To measure effects on the parents, self-report questionnaires were used; on the children, standardized tests measuring cognitive and intellectual development, school readiness, self-concept and social adjustment; on program quality, staff questionnaires; and on community change, structured group interviews with local citizens and parents.

In centers where parent involvement was not high, parents felt less able to influence their school systems and less in control of things generally. Parents who were highly involved saw themselves as more skilled, successful, and satisfied. Also, parents who were more highly involved in Headstart tended to become more involved in the community after their children graduated from the program.

Centers with high levels of parent involvement had better results on the children's achievement (verbal intelligence, self-concept, motor tests, behavior in classroom and home). The type of parent involvement did not appear to make a difference as much as the extent of parent involvement.

Centers that were high on parent involvement consistently were higher on nearly all measures of program quality,

and were located in communities where significantly greater positive changes were reported in local institutions.

R
Radin, Norma
"The Impact of a Kindergarten Home Counseling Program"
Exceptional Children, December 1969.

Summary: High IQ children in an experimental kindergarten program whose mothers had counseling in how to use home teaching materials showed greater cognitive growth than children in the regular program.

This study of a supplementary kindergarten enrichment program in the Ypsilanti, Michigan, public schools tested the relative effects of a supplementary learning experience and of home counseling on the children's cognitive growth. All the children had some preschool experience and high scores on the Stanford-Binet or other IQ tests.

The children were divided into three groups. Group I attended a half day of kindergarten plus a half day of a Piaget-style supplementary class, and also received bi-weekly visits by a home counselor. Group II attended both classes but had no home visits. Group III, the control, attended only a half day of kindergarten. All children were pre- and post-tested a year apart on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test and the Cognitive Home Environment Scale.

The Group I mothers were treated as resources for their children and shown how to use materials found in the home to reinforce what was being taught in the classroom.

Although all the children made significant gains, those showing the most growth, especially on the Stanford-Binet test, were in Group I and receiving the home involvement program. The other two groups were almost identical to one another in results. When the researchers checked further, they found that the children who were in Group I and who had also had home involvement in preschool, made the highest gains of all.

Radin, Norma
"Three Degrees of Maternal Involvement in a Preschool Program: Impact on Mothers and Children"
Child Development, December 1972, pp. 1355-1364.

Summary: Lower IQ children in an experimental preschool program whose mothers had counseling in home teaching techniques showed greater gains in achievement than children whose mothers were not involved.

This is a continuation of the study of an experimental preschool program in Ypsilanti, Michigan, testing the relative effects of degrees of parent involvement on children's cognitive growth. In this phase, there were three groups of children, with lower IQ scores (85-95) on the Stanford-

Binet test, selected from a Piaget-style preschool program. Group A had 4-1/2 hours a week of preschool, plus bi-weekly tutorial sessions observed by mothers who were encouraged to continue the techniques at home, plus weekly group meetings between the mothers and social workers on home stimulation of intellectual growth. Group B was treated the same, except that there were no group meetings for the mothers. Group C children's mothers were not involved at all.

Each group was pre- and post-tested using the Stanford-Binet and Peabody Picture Vocabulary tests. One year after leaving the program, a pre-selected group of children was given follow-up tests on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence and the Peabody Picture test.

At the end of the preschool year, all children showed significant gains on the tests, but at the end of kindergarten, only the Group A and Group B children, whose mothers had been involved, showed continued growth in verbal achievement.

R ED 017 550
Rankin, Paul T.
"The Relationship Between Parent Behavior and Achievement of Inner-City Elementary School Children"
Paper presented at AERA Convention, February 1967.

Summary: Children who are high achievers are much more likely to have active, interested and involved parents than children who are low achievers.

To determine what kinds of parent behavior are related to the scholastic achievement of inner-city elementary school children, 32 low achievers and 32 high achievers were selected from 241 third and fourth graders at a school in Detroit. The tests used to determine achievement levels were the California Achievement Test and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and to measure aptitude levels, the Detroit Primary Learning Aptitude Test and the Beginning First Grade Intelligence Test. Children were ranked according to the difference between their achievement and aptitude scores, from highest achievers to lowest underachievers. Those selected for study were from the top and the bottom of the list, excluding those whose mothers were not available for interview.

The parent interview schedule included 123 questions designed to determine whether parents engaged in the kind of behavior thought to have an influence on student achievement. The data were then analyzed to see whether the parents of high achievers behaved differently from the parents of low achievers.

The types of behavior found to influence achievement significantly were providing experiences for children (e.g., playing games, attending church, talking), showing interest in the children's school activities (e.g., requiring children to make high marks, talking about school activities,

helping with difficult homework), developing the children's interest in reading, and taking the initiative in contacting school personnel (e.g., conferring with the principal).

R
Rich, Dorothy
"The Relationship of the Home Learning Lab Technique to First Grade Student Achievement"
Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1976.

Summary: Parents who use simple, learning-at-home techniques to tutor their children can help to raise their children's achievement in reading.

To test the effectiveness of teacher-designed "Home Learning Lab" activities for parents to use with their children, The Home and School Institute of Catholic University conducted a study of 218 first graders randomly selected from the Washington, DC Archdiocese schools, half to the experimental group, half to control. Both groups were pre- and post-tested on the McGraw-Hill Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills.

The treatment consisted of eight activities, each written recipe-style on a single piece of paper, that parents and children working together at home could use to reinforce and supplement reading and math. Preceded only by a letter of explanation, the papers were sent home from school, one every two weeks for 16 weeks.

The experimental group achieved statistically higher scores in reading than the control group. The predominantly black, experimental classes scored significantly higher on both reading and math.

This dissertation is important because the "recipes" developed have been used successfully in a number of other school systems (most of the research is unpublished), and because they have been published in a new book by Simon & Schuster, Parents and Schools Working Together ($12.95).

R ED 183 682
Scott, Ralph and Davis, Arthur, Jr.
"Preschool Education and Busing: Do We Have our Priorities Straight?"
Paper presented to the National Urban Education Association, November 1979.

Summary: Disadvantaged children who participated in a three-year preschool enrichment program with strong parent involvement remained more advanced in basic skills through the third grade.

This study evaluates the Home Start Program in Waterloo, Iowa, which offered prekindergarten enrichment, centered in the home, to 89 children over a three-year period. Older siblings of 44 of the children were used as control subjects. Evaluative testing was done at the beginning of the program, using the Iowa Tests of Preschool Development, during the program's last year, while the children were in

an in-school program, using the Learning Reading System Seriation Test, and when the children reached the third grade, using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Control group comparisons were possible only on the third grade ITBS scores.

Paraprofessional home workers met once a week with mothers or guardians to hold family-like conversations about family interactions, the child's activities, and the types of books and toys that were available from the program's library. The results of these meetings were evaluated in staff sessions and the need for professional referrals determined. One year before kindergarten, the children attended an enrichment program for 2-1/2 hours a day.

Probably because of socio-economic factors, there was no evidence that white children gained from the program. Black children, however, scored significantly higher on the ITBS, especially in math problems, where the Home Start graduates' scores averaged 1.2 grade equivalences higher than their older siblings.

Sinclair, Robert L. (ed), Davies, Don; Fantini, Mario; Ghory, Ward; Lightfoot, Sara Lawrence; and Tyler, Ralph W.
"A Two-Way Street: Home-School Cooperation in Curriculum Decisionmaking"
Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, 1980.

This collection of thoughtful papers, defining curriculum in its broadest sense, is replete with references to unpublished or hard-to-find studies linking parent involvement with student achievement. Fantini considers in historical and theoretical perspective the roles parents and the community play in public schools and presents a criticical analysis of the research. Ghory subjects a number of current assumptions about teacher-parent relationships to close scrutiny and rewrites them, referring to a number of interesting studies. Lightfoot explores family-school relationships, pointing out that the different roles each is expected to play create conflict and misunderstanding that inhibit student achievement.

Sowers, Jacquelyn; Lang, Cynthia; and Gowett, Joan M.
"Parent Involvement in the Schools: A State of the Art Report"
Education Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02160.

This is an excellent report on successful parent involvement programs around the country. Many of the project directors who were interviewed indicate that student

achievement improved or that behavior leading to greater achievement resulted.

The conclusion contains sections that identify barriers to parent involvement and characteristics common to exemplary programs.

ED 088 588
Stearns, Miriam Sherman and Peterson, Susan, et al.
"Parent Involvement in Compensatory Education Programs: Definitions and Findings"
Menlo Park Educational Policy Research Center, Stanford Research Institute, August 1973.

Summary: This major review of federal evaluation reports suggests that there is a connection between parent involvement and institutional change and that involving parents as tutors and trainers can have positive effects on children's IQ scores.

This is the first major review of evaluation data on federal compensatory education programs that attempts to relate parent involvement to student achievement. Because of the lack of strong data at that time (1973) showing measurable improvement in children's achievement from compensatory education programs, however, it was inherently difficult to correlate any features of the programs with success, much less to be able to pinpoint parent involvement. It is a very thoughtful analysis, nevertheless, and explores a number of important issues.

In these programs, there are three major roles for parents to play: tutors, employees, and decision makers. There is evidence that involving parents as trainers and tutors can improve children's performance, especially that of young, preschool children. The effects vary directly with the intensity and length of the program and appear in both the children's IQ scores and in parents' attitudes about themselves.

The findings on the effect of employing parents as classroom aides or community workers are sparse, largely because programs that do also introduce many other changes into the classroom. In preschool projects staffed primarily by paraprofessionals, "positive impacts on participating children have been demonstrated," (p. 24).

The effects of parent involvement in decision-making on children's academic performance are particularly difficult to measure and evaluate, because they cannot be easily isolated from other factors and because they take longer to show up.

Stearns speculates on the reason why parent involvement should affect achievement, and reasons that the different roles parents play set certain chains of events in motion. When parents learn to teach their own children, they not only give their children new skills but also build their own feelings of competence. This in turn motivates

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the children to perform better, setting a cycle of success-reinforcement in motion (see diagram in introduction).

She concludes that for parent involvement to be effective, it must be carefully organized, with clear guidelines for substantive participation.

R ED 146 111
Wagenaar, Theodore C.
"School Achievement Level Vis-a-Vis Community Involvement and Support: An Empirical Assessment"
Ohio State University, Columbus, Hershon Center
Paper presented at Annual Meeting of American Sociological Association, September 1977.

Summary: This study of the public schools in a large mid-western city indicates that schools with high achievement levels are more open to parent and community involvement and that more closed schools have lower achievement levels and less community support.

The hypothesis of this HEW-sponsored study is that schools with high community involvement and support also have high levels of student achievement.

Data were gathered from 135 schools in a large mid-western city, to determine levels of community involvement and support and the average reading and math test scores for each school. Controlling for SES (socio-economic status), to factor out any effects of class bias, and using average figures for each school to test the effect

on the entire school's performance rather than on that of individual students, the data were correlated to determine the relationship between types of community support and involvement and levels of student achievement.

"Community involvement and support" was measured according to 29 separate items, or definitions, that covered fund raising and political support by active community groups, opportunities for parents to participate in school activities and meet with teachers, numbers of parents and citizens who participate in school meetings and functions, percentage of voters who participated in last school bond issue, numbers of times community groups use school facilities, numbers of contacts between principal or teachers and parents at school and at home, and the role of citizens in school policy decisions, such as selecting curricula, hiring teachers, setting discipline procedures, and allocating the budget.

Most related to achievement were the measures of community group support and fund raising, attending school meetings, and number of school functions. Also related was the number of times community groups use school facilities. Somewhat less related, but still significant, were discussion opportunities and school-parent contact. Neither of the two citizen participation in policy factors was found to be related to achievement.

> In sum . . . analysis indicates a generally positive relationship between school achievement level and such factors as behavioral involvement and support, use of school facilities, and an open communications atmosphere. But actual participation in decision making is apparently unrelated to achievement (p. 13).

The author speculates that more open school systems are more effective, and that a supportive and involved environment is more beneficial than a power-wielding environment. Because the study did control for SES influence, it suggests that, contrary to Coleman's finding (1966) that home factors are more important than school factors, the school environment (level of community support) does make a difference.

ED 133 361

Wellisch, Jean B.
"An In-Depth Study of Emergency School Aid Act Schools: 1974-1975"
Systems Development Corporation, Santa Monica, CA 1976.

Summary: Schools identified as having successful Emergency School Aid programs, where students improved significantly in reading and math achievement, also had high parent involvement in the classroom.

This is part of a larger study on the effectiveness of the federal ESAA program to reduce minority group isolation in the schools. For the larger, 3-year study, data were collected from matched pairs of sample schools

participating in ESAA and control schools, to assess gains made by students in reading and math, using standardized achievement tests. Questionnaires were also used to provide information on programs, school policies, and perceptions of discrimination.

For the "in-depth" study of successful programs, a sub-sample of 24 schools was selected and matched, using both ESAA and control schools. Schools were at least two of the three grades tested showed improvement in either reading or math were defined as "successful." The remainder were classified "non successful." Because of sampling difficulties only elementary schools (grades 3, 4, and 5) were studied.

Five "constructs" were identified to determine their effect on student achievement:

- organizational climate
- parent and community involvement
- character of reading and math instruction
- resource use in reading and math instruction
- equality of educational opportunity.

Interviewer-observer teams of two were assigned to study from two to four schools. They were <u>not</u> informed of the status or test scores of their schools. From their intensive, two-week visits to each school, information on each construct was gathered.

The parent involvement section tried to answer three questions:

- How much have the schools attempted to involve parents?
- How much are parents actually involved with the school and is that involvement related to the school's efforts?
- Are differences in the levels of parent involvement associated with differences in student achievement?

Several measures of the first two questions were designed and each school was scored accordingly. It is interesting that most schools scored high. (Only four of the 24 fell on the low end of the scale.) The schools were then ranked according to their degree of parent involvement and this was correlated with their test scores.

In general, the researchers found that

1. Organizational climate (strong administrative leadership and training for new teachers) is associated with math gain.
2. Parent and community involvement was associated with <u>both</u> reading and math gains.
3. Reading and math program characteristics (using behavioral objectives, adequate instructional practice, less frequent use of positive reinforcement) were associated with both reading and math gains.

4. Reading and math resource use (i.e., remedial specialists) were associated with reading and math gains (proportional to amount spent per pupil).

The researchers then attempted to determine which factors contributed most to types of gain.

- For reading achievement, parent involvement in the classroom ranked second (of five factors), just under adequacy of instructional practice, and over behavioral objectives and costs for remedial specialists.
- For math achievement, parent involvement ranked third (of seven), just below percent minority enrollment and costs for remedial specialists, and above behavioral objectives and administrative leadership.
- A composite profile of a school with both math and reading gain includes:
  1. parent involvement in the classroom
  2. higher per-pupil costs for specialists
  3. use of behavioral objectives.

In their analysis of parent involvement, the researchers concluded that:

1. Parents are much more likely to participate in schools where teachers indicate that administrators assume responsibility for policy.

2. Parent/community involvement in the school is unrelated to the frequency of the school's promotional activities and meetings.
3. Schools where parents are involved in the classroom were more successful in raising academic achievement. (Schools using aides who are not parents had lower achievement.)
4. No relationship was observed between parent involvement outside the classroom (as employees or on advisory committees) and student achievement.

Willmon, Betty
"Parent Participation as a Factor in the Effectiveness of Headstart Programs"
Journal of Educational Research, May 1969.

Summary: Children in Headstart programs whose parents were "very active" in the program performed significantly better on reading readiness tests than children whose parents were not active.

This study looked at the effects of parent participation on their children's scores on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test. Included in the study were 531 children participating in a summer Headstart program in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1966. Teachers classified the children into three groups according to the level of their parents' involvement: Active, Very Active, and None. The

children were tested on the MRT during the first week of first grade.

Parents in the "Active" group attended conferences, helped to supervise in the classroom, and observed. Parents in the "Very Active" group also were involved in special learning activities, field trips, and class projects.

R ED 104 527
Woods, Carol
"The Effect of the Parent Involvement Program on Reading Readiness Scores"
Mesa Arizona Public Schools, 1974.

Summary: Disadvantaged kindergarten children in an Arizona public school system whose parents helped in the classroom and tutored their children at home gained significantly in reading readiness.

This is a study of the effectiveness of a parent involvement program in the Mesa, Arizona, public schools to raise the reading readiness level of disadvantaged kindergarten children. Fourteen kindergarten classes in five Title I schools (269 children, 105 parents) participated in the program. A random sample from the five schools of 40 students whose parents did attend and 40 whose parents did not attend was selected. Each group was pre- and post-tested on the Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis Test.

Four trained program aides administered the parent involvement program. Before school started, house calls were made to all parents to explain the program and invite them to attend. The program itself was held two days each week. At the first day, parents were shown word games and given take-home materials. On the next day, parents were instructed in teaching skills. In addition, parents went into the classroom one day (40 minutes) a week to work on the games with small groups of children. (Both groups of children had the benefit of working with parents in the classroom.)

Because the children whose parents chose not to participate scored much lower on the pre-test than the others, the findings were complicated. "When the gains are viewed in proportion to the possible gain for each group, the experimental group attained a 90% gain, while the control group attained an 85% gain." On a more difficult phoneme test, the experimental group scored significantly better than the control group."

This program was generally very effective, as all the children scored in the top quartile by the end of the year whether or not their parents participated. The author speculates that the presence of parents, even if not their own, in the classroom was a factor in its success.

In the introduction to her study the author cites a number of similar but unpublished studies done in other school systems that also report success.

EA 014 212

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ADDENDUM

Parent Participation--Student Achievement: The Evidence Grows
NCCE, 1981

Lazar, Irving and Darlington, Richard B.
"Summary: Lasting Effects After Preschool"
Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, Cornell University, 1978.

Summary: Long-term study of 11 early childhood projects involving parents shows that participating children performed better in school and had significantly fewer assignments to special education classes or grade retentions than control children for many years after they completed the projects.

This report for the Education Commission of the States is a summary analysis of the lasting effects of preschool interventional projects for predominantly black, lower-income children. Data on over 2,000 children were gathered from 11 carefully designed projects that were conducted around the country during the 1960's. Follow up data were collected on both subject and control children in 1976-77, and compared to determine if the preschool projects still had measurable effects on the children's performance in school.

Basically, the programs studied fall into three categories: 1) center-based, with a nursery school type program where parents visited and observed; 2) home-based, with educational efforts directed toward training the mother as a major instrument of influence in the child's life; and 3) combined home/center, with a nursery school

program combined with periodic home visits.

The researchers found that both individually and as a group the programs had lasting effects on the children's performance in school. Early education programs significantly reduced the number of children assigned to special education classes or retained in grade, regardless of their initial abilities or home background, and increased children's scores on fourth grade math and reading tests. Graduates of all the projects maintained higher IQ scores for up to three years; graduates of three of the projects maintained higher IQ scores 10-15 years later. In addition, children who attended preschool were more likely to have attitudes related to achievement and their mothers were more likely to have higher aspirations for them.

When the researchers attempted to determine if one program design was more effective than another, they found all the programs to be about equally effective with all types of children, whether high or low IQ, male or female, educated or uneducated parents, etc.

Although parent involvement was not isolated and separately measured as a factor in program effectiveness, largely because there was substantial parent involvement in all the programs studied, the researchers feel that it is an integral part of a "cluster" of factors essential to program success. They also cautioned that a program must be well designed to be effective.